

Wellness Policy

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus the School is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the School that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and after-school snacks.)
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Councils

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health committees to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee will also serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies.

The committee shall be comprised of individuals representing the school and community and shall include but not be limited to: parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that more than half of the served grains are whole grain.³

Schools will, to the extent possible, engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- Schools will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, or “grab-and-go” breakfast.
- Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as “grab-and-go” or classroom breakfast.

. Schools:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 15 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods as much as possible (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district’s responsibility to operate a food service program, we will require continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs shall include appropriate certification and/or training programs for food service directors, school cafeteria managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility. Cafeteria managers will attend state training a minimum of every 3 years; more often if new guidelines and requirements are enacted.

Meals Brought from Home: The school will encourage meals brought from home (packed lunches) to contain healthy, nutritious items. Ideas and suggestions for families will be included in the school newsletter. Carbonated beverages (soda) will not be consumed during the lunch period and, if included, students will be asked to save such for consumption after the school day. Parents will be informed of the “no soda” policy in the student handbook and reminded of it in the monthly newsletter.

Foods for Sale Policy

This policy shall be directed toward foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte, fundraisers, school stores, etc. This will include food and beverages

sold for actual money AND food and beverages “sold” for tokens, tickets, or other such mediums of exchange. These rules will be adhered to from 12:01 am until no less than 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

Elementary and Middle Schools. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary and middle schools. Given young children’s limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water-plain, unflavored; 100% fruit and vegetable juices juice; unflavored or flavored fat-free or unflavored low fat fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 100% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

High Schools. In high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Foods All foods sold separate from the National School Meal program will meet the USDA nutrition standards (See Attachment)

Beverages All beverages sold separate from the National School Meal program will meet the USDA nutrition standards (See Attachment)

Fundraising Activities. To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children’s diets and health. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children’s nutritional needs, children’s ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards. Schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The district will distribute a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers. Celebrations will be held after the lunch period.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will be encouraged to meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Indiana Math and Science Academy aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise) at the middle and high school levels;
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and

- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity (such as Brain Breaks) between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, and post nutrition tips on school websites. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The district/school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the district/school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Food Marketing in Schools. School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will attempt to limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; in-school television, such as Channel One; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities. Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are therefore allowable) include: vending machine covers promoting water; pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; sales of fruit for fundraisers; and coupons for discount gym memberships.

Staff Wellness. Indiana Math and Science Academy highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.

All students in grades K-5, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education or its equivalent of 90 minutes/week for elementary school students for the entire school year.

Students in grades 6-8 will receive 40 minutes/week with required supplemental home activities to equal an additional 300 minutes/week.

Students in grades 9-12 will receive a minimum of 8000 minutes during their 4 year high school experience.

All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess. All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. All elementary, middle, and high schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school child care and enrichment programs will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will be encouraged to not withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The superintendent will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the director will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school director). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

The superintendent will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.